



USAID | BANGLADESH
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PRESS RELEASE

APONJON” PUTS THE POWER OF HEALTH IN THE HANDS OF 100,000 SUBSCRIBERS ACROSS BANGLADESH

DHAKA, JULY 30 -- This month, *Aponjon*, the first-ever nationwide maternal and child health mobile messaging service in Asia, reached another milestone when it registered its 100,000th subscriber. *Aponjon* delivers stage-based essential health messages to expectant and new mothers and their families across Bangladesh via mobile phones. USAID is the primary funder of the Aponjon service. D.Net, a Bangladeshi non-profit social enterprise, is the lead implementer of the service, working in close collaboration with dozens of local and international public and private sector partners. The Government of Bangladesh has endorsed the service and actively promotes the registration of new subscribers through Ministry of Health community health workers and through non-governmental organizations.

“Aponjon” messages are designed to dispel common misconceptions, inform expecting and new mothers of potential health dangers and warning signs, help them find local healthcare services and explain the advantages of family planning. The service design of Aponjon includes not only pregnant and new mothers, but also other key decision-makers in the family such as husbands, mothers and mothers-in-law. The service is now available through a common number on Grameenphone, Banglalink, Robi, Airtel and Citycell mobile operators.

By dialing “16227” and registering for the service, subscribers receive critical health information and advice for both mothers and infants, throughout pregnancy and until a child’s first birthday. Each message, which costs Tk. 2 (about 2.5 cents), is exactly tailored to the stage of pregnancy or the age of the child. The service is provided free of charge to 20 per cent of subscribers. *Aponjon* has recently begun a counseling service to give expectant and new mothers the opportunity to receive advice directly from a doctor. The service is reachable via the mobile phone(s) of the registered mothers and family members by dialing 16227 and pressing 2 to reach the doctors.

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Through its efforts to quickly scale this unique service, D.Net is truly living up to “Aponjon’s” mission to put the “Power of Health in Every Mother’s Hand”.

Aponjon is an initiative of the Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action (MAMA), a public-private partnership between USAID, Johnson & Johnson, the mHealth Alliance, the United Nations Foundation, and BabyCenter. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.aponjon.com.bd/index1.php>. To view an overview video of Aponjon, please see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2je5iZCiLg>

The U.S. Government, through USAID, has provided over \$6 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2012 alone, USAID provided more than \$200 million to improve the lives of people in Bangladesh. USAID supports programs in Bangladesh that: promote democratic institutions and practices, expand food security and economic opportunity, improve health and education services, and increase resiliency to climate change through adaptation and low carbon development.

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